

REDEEMING
THE
TIME.
A
SERMON
P R E A C H E D
At *Preston in Lancashire*, *January 4th* 1657. at the
Funeral of the Honourable Lady,
THE LADY
MARGARET HOUGHTON.

Revised, and, somewhat Enlarged; and, at the impor-
tunity of some Friends, now published.

B Y
ISAAC AMBROSE. Preacher of the Gospel
at *Garstange* in the same County.

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Eph. 5. 16. *Redeeming the Time.*

HE Apostle here gives many Lessons ; exhorting 1. to love, *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.* 2. To fly fornication, *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints.* 3. To avoid intimate, dear, or familiar converse with gracelets men, *Be not, ye therefore partakers with them ; for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are you light, walk as Children of light.* 4. To walk warily, exactly, circumspectly, *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.* And this last he amplifies from an effect, which testifies a circumspect, exact, and accurate walking, to wit, *Redeeming the time, &c.*

I am only to learn you some part of this last Lesson ; wherein you have 1. The instruction it self, *See that you walk circumspectly.* 2. The amplification of this instruction ; and that is either from the reason binding to it, *not as fools, but as wise,* or from the effect testifying of it, *Redeeming the time.*

1. For the instruction it self, *See that ye walk circumspectly, ἀπίστος, exactly, precisely,* no word fits the Greek better than this ; it comes of two words, *πρέπει το ἀξεῖ, οὐ τὸ πάθον,* which signific to go to the extremity of a thing : *we must be willing to go to the utmost of every Command.* To which purpose are those precepts, to be hot in Religion, Rev. 3. 16. to be zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. to be fervent in spirit, Rev. 3. 16. Rom. 12. 11. to strive to enter in at the strait Gate, Luk. 13. 24. with an holy violence to lay hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 11. 12. But this is not the point I shall now insist on.

2. For the reason binding to it, *not as fools, but as wise.* It points to us, that exactness, or preciseness in holy walking is a fruit of true Wisdom. Luther brings in the men of the World objecting against him, *Num tu solus sapiis ? Num solus tu Deus places ?* What ? are you the only Wise man in the World ? do you only please God ? The answer was easie from this Text, that *exact walking, or a strict conversation, is the fruit of Wisdom.* But neither is this the point that I shall insist on.

3. For the effect testifying of it, *Redeeming the time.* If I may open the words, 1. By time is meant opportunity ; which either it taken for the whole course of our remaining life, or for such and such particular occasions as God doth offer to this or that particular duty ; and both these may be understood here. 2. By *Redeeming the time,* is meant either the avoiding of some hindrances, which would take us off from the opportunity ; or the recompencing of some former unfruitfulness, which hath been in the former part of our life : or a gaining, stretching, improving of time by embracing all the occasions of doing all the good we can do : and we shall discover anon, that all these may be understood here. In the mean time we lay down this Position as a necessary, fundamental, Evangelical truth, that *time must be Redeemed* Look to it all ye that fear God ; herein will your spiritual Wisdom, and exact walking appear, even in *Redeeming the time.*

In the prosecution of this point, I shall 1. give you the *on.* 2. The *time.* 3. The *Redeeming.* And then come to Application.

1. That time must be redeemed, the very Heathens confirm it : 'Twas the saying of one Pittacus, one of the seven Wise-men, *γνῶντας τὸν χρόνον, know time ; lose not a minute.* Theophrastus had another saying near to this, *Sumptus pretiosissimus tempus :* time is of precious cost. Pliny seeing but his Nephew at leisure, taking some turnes in his walk, was so very strict, that he tells him, *Non licet his locas perdere, he should not lose so many precious hours.* When Titus the Son of Vespasian who revenged,

v. 1.
v. 3.
v. 7, 8.

Tit. 2. 14.
Rom. 12. 11.
Luke 1. 24;
Mat. 11. 12;

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Christ's blood on *Jerusalem*, returned victor to *Rome*, rememb'ring one night that had done no good that day, he cryed out to his friends, *Hec perdidit diem! O alas, I have lost a day!* Little do we think of losing time, and is not this our shame? If such men without God and Christ, without Law and Gospel, without all the promises of God and Christ in Law or Gospel, could say thus much, how may they rise up in judgment against many of us? But we cite not them, as though we stood in need of

Col. 4. 5.
Heb. 3.13, 15.
1 Pet. 1.17, 18.
1 Pet. 4. 3.

their learning; the Apostles themselves give it us in charge, *walk in Wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time, and exhort one another while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And again, while it is said to day, *if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* And, *pass the time of your sojourning here with fear, forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, — but with the pretious blood of Christ.* q. d. Christ redeemed you, and therefore you had need to redeem the time. *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, — so that henceforth we should not serve sin, — or no longer should we live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.* — *Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not; as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* It is *Hieroms* saying upon these words, *O how short is this race of my life? how short is this time now in hand? my studying, preaching, writing, correcting, reading, what is it but a gaining or a loosing of my time?*

Rom. 6. 6,
Gal. 10. 9. 6.

Breve vita Curriculum,
&c. Jeron. 3.

Comments.
John 4.

2. What is it to redeem the time? I answer, it comprehends these particulars.

Cor. 6. 10.

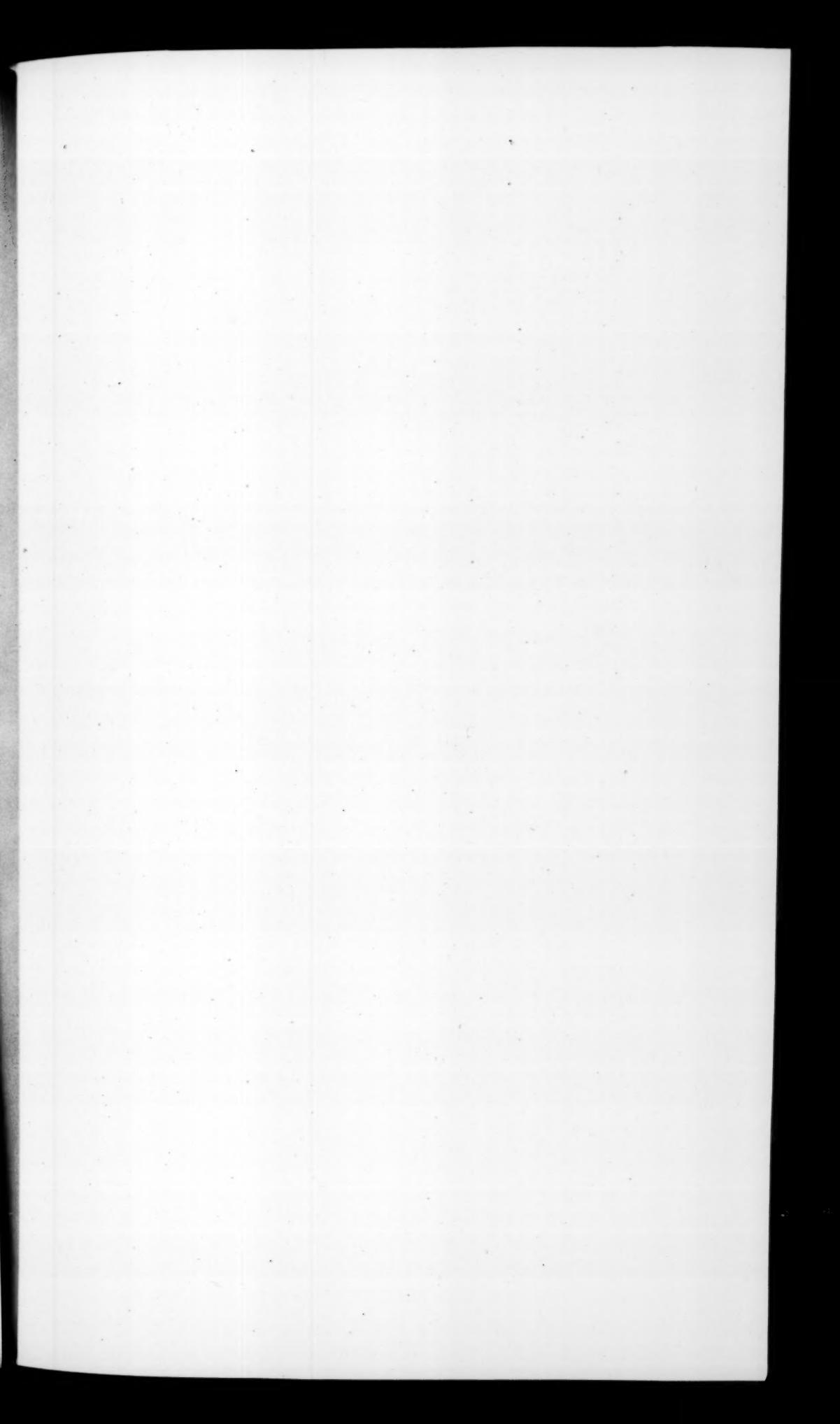
1. An avoiding any thing which would hinder us from taking the opportunity. If you ask, what are these hinderances? I answer, 1. Ignorance; many think they are not in so strait a manner to be accountable for time. It is a general opinion of the grossly ignorant, that if they can but pass away in time without doing any harm (as they say) they are well enough; as if no account of time might be given at all; they are ignorant of this principle, that they *are to improve, and so redeem the time.* 2. Slothfulness; this makes men heedless, or careless of their time: As it is with the sluggard, *Let a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the arms be sleep.* So it is with the idle person, *Let this hour, and this day be spent in doing nothing.* O the many golden hours, and days, and years that many thousands spend, and yet cannot give the least account wherein either they have glorified God, or served their generations. 3. Love of fleshly liberty: Alas, what care they for redeeming time who are set on their lusts and liberties to sin? All the care they have, it is merely to eat, and drink, and play: sensual pleasures are the whole study of these men, and if they can but enjoy them, let time slip away as it will, they never regard it.

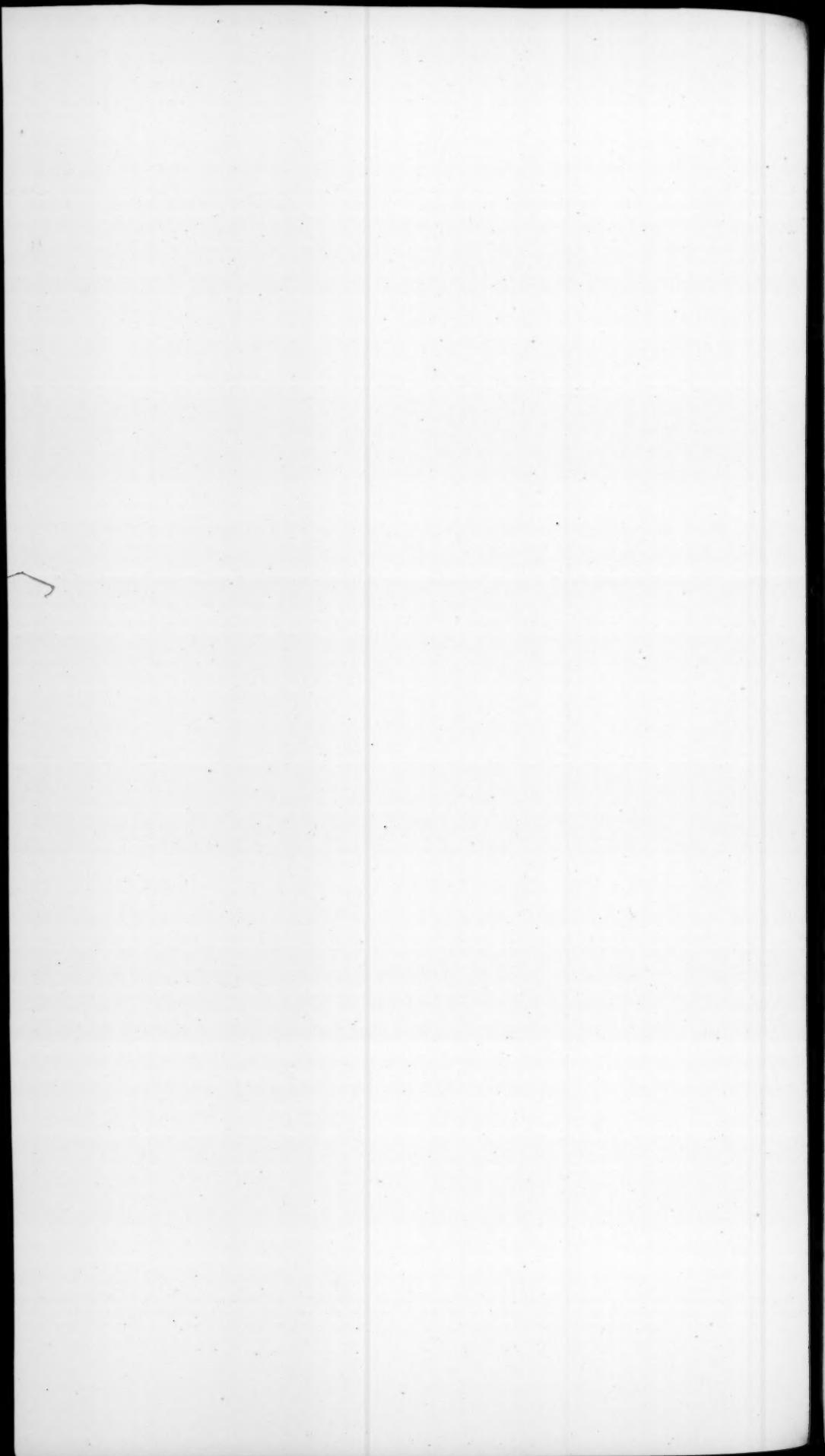
2. A recompensing of some former unfruitfulness: *εξαπεγκω* hath this interpretation, it is a *redeeming* (as it were) of that jewel of time that hath been formerly lost. As a travailer that hath long stayed at an Inne, when he finds the night comming upon him, he mends his pace, and goes as many miles in an hour or two, as he did before in many. This me thinks comes nearest to the word *Redimo*, to *redeem*, or to buy back again. It is taken (say some) from the custom and practice of wise Merchants or Tradesmen, who use to buy their commodities while fit time of buying serves, and while the market holds; and having haply had great losses, or formerly spent their time idly or unthrifstily, they do by their after diligence seek to redeem, and (as it were) to buy back again the time that is past.

3. An embracing of all occasions for acting graces, and doing good; and this agrees with the reason following, *for the dayes are evil.* q. d. Look to your selves, for these are hard and dismal times; now is much corruption, and great persecution, and the opportunity of good is exceedingly straitened; and therefore it is very needful to catch at time, and to lay hold on an opportunity, both to exercise graces, and to be doing as much good as you may, while the time permitteth. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, saith Christ, the night cometh when no man can work: And, yet a little while and the light is with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: And as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.* Mark these sayings, *while it is called to day, and while the light is with you; and while you have opportunity.* Thus you see what it is.

John 9. 4.
John 1. 35.
Gal. 6. 10.

3. But





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3

3. But why must time be redeemed? what necessity for that? I answer —

1. In respect of time past. Alas, many a golden season have we lost, how many hours, and dayes, and morths, and years have we spent idly, and done little gone? Is it not time then to lay hold of every opportunity to redeem time past? When God brought us forth into this world, his commands were upon us to work in his vine-
yard, and to that purpose he designed to every one his time; *thus many dayes, or months, or years shall you every one live, and while you live be employing these and these talents; it is my command upon all the sons of men, in the sweat of thy face (i. e. of thy brow, or of thy brain) shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; and why then do ye stand all the day idle? why are ye not in the work, and especially in the work of the Lord?* Gen. 3. 19.

Now if this be so, that there is such a command, and that we have broke this command at such a time, and such a time, is it not our duty, and is there not cause to redeem the time? A fellow that hath loytered a great part of the day in his busyness, and yet must needs finish his work, will he not toyl and sweat at it towards night? will he not double his pains, and put all his strength to it? So we, having not onely been slack in our busyness about Gods service, and slow in the way towards Heaven, but even for many yeares having perhaps run in a quite contrary course, and done the Devils work, how should we now towards the night of our natural life, and in the conclusion of the short span thereof, spare no paines, double our diligence, pres hard to the price of the high calling with an holy kind of violence, lay hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, with all zeal, courage, and resolution labour to redeem past, because it is past? This our reason.

2. In respect of time present: It is but a moment on which depends eternal bliss or woe, if we have lost time past, and if we do lose time present, we may be undone for ever. In this respect may we say of time, as Boaz said to his kinsman concerning Ruth, *If you will redeem it, redeem it: never think of redeeming it to morrow, or the other day, or hereafter; for no time is properly yours but the present time.* Behold ^{Ruth. 4. 4.} now is the accepted time; behold ^{2 Cor. 6. 2.} now is the day of salvation: now while I am speaking and you hearing; now ere the night be done or the next day comes on. Oh why should we trifle away the time which is properly ours, and promise to our selves great things in a time which is none of ours? When Christ mourned over Jerusalem he bemoans it ^{Luk. 19. 42.} thus, *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace: So may I mourn over you, if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day: when's that? while Ministers call and you hear, this is your day; and therefore he that never heard effectually, let him hear now; it is now high time to awake out of that cursed security wherein you lie; the Lord is now come near, Christ Jesus is calling, mercy is intreating, and wisdom is even hoarse with crying after you, if you lose this time, this hour of grace, who knows whether ever you shall enjoy such another season? Oh take time by the forehead! post est occasio calvus; it will be too late soon. Now the Lord calls, and now it concerns us to bestir our selves upon these grounds.*

1. Because now are evil dayes; the very reason in the Text: thefe are the last times, which the Apostle calls *perillous times*; and why perillous? For men shall believe of ^{Tim. 3. 1. 2.} their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, &c. One would think it rather an History than a Prophecie of our dayes. Oh is it not time now, if ever, to redeem the time.

2. Because now are dayes of light: notwithstanding the evils of some or most in comparison, yet many glorious truths do now appear: the Devil, I know, now brings forth his ware, but withal God is now a communicating many blessed truths. In respect of us, our fathers before, and since the Reformation were in great darkness; the candle of God now shines upon this Nation with extraordinary light: And what then? Why therefore it concerns us to redeem the time: This is the Apostles argument, *The time of this ignorance God winks at but now he commandeth every man every where to repent.* This is another reason. ^{Act. 17. 30.}

3. In respect of time to come: I shall instance onely in time of death, and time of judgment.

1. Death is at hand, and then we cannot redeem the time: So the Preacher, *What- Eccles. 9. 10. sever thy hand findeth to doe, doe it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* q. d. If there be any thing to be done, if there be any duty God requires, doe it in life, for when death shall come there shall be no more preaching, praying, hearing. *The grave cannot praise* ^{Isa. 38. 18. 19.} *thee.*

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ibee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth; the living, the living be shall praise thee, as I do this day.

2. Our doom for eternit y of joyes or woes drawes on apace, and is even at the door. Then I am sure, account must be given for time, as well as for all other things. *Come, will Christ say, give an account of thy stewardship, of all things done in the flesh, and of every moment of time: how didst thou spend such a day, such a Sabbath? was not such a day spent sinfully, or very unprofitably, and was it ever redeemed?* Here's a reason indeed to force on us this duty. But of this and other reasons I shall speak more in the motives, when I exhort you to it.

Use. 1. Well then, is it so, that time must be redeemed? this may reprove several sorts of persons: as—

Ezek. 16. 1. The idle; that are so far from redeeming time, that they are perpetually losing time. This was the sin of *Sodom, pride, fulness of bread: and abundance of idleness, was in her.* Give me leave a little to lay open this sin. Surely this sin is the fountain of all sins; by doing nothing we shall be sure to learn how to doe ill. It is said of *Rome*, that during the time of their Wars with *Carthage*, and other enemies in *Africa*, they knew not what vice meant; but no sooner had they got the conquest, than through idleness they came to ruin. Rust you know will fret into the hardest Iron, if it be not used; so vice will infect the best heart, if given to idleness. Standing Water is sooner frozen than the running stream; and he that lieth is more subject to sleep than he that walketh; so the idle man is far more subject to temptation than he that is profitably exercised. Idleness is the Devils special opportunity; and we have an instance in *David's* idleness, who at that time, was set on by the Devil to commit other sins of Adultery and Murder. But this is a sin that very boyes in Schools can declame against; and if it were not that I see many amongst us spend their time so very unprofitably, I had not once named it. Oh think of it! If a Master should set a light upon a Candlestick, and give his servant food, and time, and all things convenient wherewith to work, yet when he comes to see if his task be finished, he finds that the meat is wasted, the time is ended, the Candle to the very socket burned, and little or nothing of the work is furthered, how would such a servant excuse himself unto his Master? And is it not so with many of you? God hath given you meat, drink, and time; he hath given you Candle, Fire, and matter; but what have you done? Is not the lamp of your life almost consumed, and yet you have not

Marth. 20. 6. finished the work that was given you to doe? Ob why stand ye here all the day idle?

Job 21. 12, 13. 2. The voluptuous: these mispend their time as ill as the former. They take the timbrel and harp and, rejoice at the sound of the organ, they spend their dayes in mirth. They waste the fat and marrow (as it were) of precious time, even the flower of their age, in froth and folly. Lord, that men should live upon earth, as *Livianian* in the Sea, onely to take their sport and pastime therein! We have seen the sad Catastrophe of some who have led such lives; and I believe still there is a generation of men, that except they be continually exercised in variety of pleasures, they are sore troubled with time; what else is the meaning of all those *passe-times* (as they call them) but onely a concatenation of such delights as please the flesh, that time may not be so tedious wearisome unto them? Little doe these men

Presens tempus consider that saying of *Chrysostome*, *The present time is not for melting into mirth, non effundendi but for lamentation and mourning; the Devil omits no time to hurt you, for he knowes gaudi, sed tristis, et lamentacionis &c.* *Chrys. in cap. 5. ad Ephes. Ser. 17.* his time is short; still is he laying his snares to intrap mens souls; he goes about like a roaring Lion to devour; he roars, and fumes, and flishes out fire against your Salvation; and doe you sit still, and jovially jest it out? Hark in your ears! the present time is not for writh, faith *Chrysostome*; no, no, the present time is for virtuous actions, to do the great busyness for which you were born, to mourn, and sorrow, and sue out your pardon, and not to spend it in jollity, and fleshly delights. If a condemned man had two or three dayes granted him to sue out his pardon, were that a time for pleasure and sports?

Gen. 2. 17. Surely the sentence of death is upon all flesh; *Is the day that thou eschewest thereof thou shalt surely die;* only a little uncertain time is granted to sue out our pardon in the name of Christ: why then doe you slip away your time sinfully, and will not redeem it?

3. The godly themselves: Alas, the best are short in this duty of redeeming the

time. Did not the Lord complain against his own people, *the Stork in the Heaven Je 1.8.7.* knoweth her appointed times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. Certainly God's own people do not so improve, as they ought, those many gracious seasons of love which the Lord affords them. O the omissions of Duties, and commissions of evils whereof we all stand guilty! of how many good hours have we been ill Husband? I shall not need to reckon up our times of infancy when we knew nothing, nor of childhood when we knew very little, nor of youth when we knew not much of that we ought to know; but since our riper years, yea since the time of our regeneracy, how prodigal have we been of this precious commodity of time? those that keep exact diaries can easily tell you, such an hour lost, and such an hour ill spent; this day I did little good, and the other day I sinned against my God. It in this case I may speak out my own experiences, I must needs acknowledge that many and many a day I have lost such and such an opportunity, and now that evil days come thick upon me, wherein I would gladly redeem my days, oh how slow and backward am I as yet in this Heavenly Duty! My dear brethren, I shall not only reprove you, but my self in this: *O why art thou so dull, and listless, and heavy, O my soul? Awake, awake! stirr up thyself, and with redoubled diligence fall to the work of redeeming time, while yet the time, the day, the season, the opportunity of grace, of Heaven, or of Salvation lasteth.*

2. *Mult time be redeemed? why then let me exhort you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to be in the exercise of this Duty. Oh redeem your time! avoid all those hinderances that would take you off: recompence your former unfruitfulness by after-diligence; embrace all occasions of acting grace, and doing good. I might dilate on all these particulars; but I shall contract all in these very words, Redeem the time, ob redeem your time.*

Use 2.

The motives besides the former reasons may be these.

1. Time is ever on the wing, and stayes for no man. The Scripture is very full of this; we meet with many similitudes hinting at the sudden, invisible motion of time. *My dayes are swifter then a post, they fly away; they are passed away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the prey.* See how Job here multiplies comparisons, that if we will not learn by the first, we might learn by a second, or by a third: *Goe we to the land, and there we see time on the spur, in the swift riding post; goe we to the Sea, and there we see time upon the wind, in the swift sailing Ship; goe we to the aire, and there we see time upon the wing, in the swift flying Eagle.* Hence the Ancients emblem'd time with wings, as if it were not only running, or sailing, but flying. Oh how sad it is to see men live as if time had leaden heels, and not swift wings; or as if time would any time stay our leisure, and not be gone. Be not deceived, you that are weary of time, either now redeem it, or you will one day cry out, *What bath pride profited us? or what good bath riches with our vanquishing brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as Post that Wild. 5. 8, 9. passeth by; or as a Ship; — or as a Bird; — or as an Arrow; — even so 10. 11, 12, 13. we, &c.*

2. As time is swift, so our time is short. The Heavens indeed are said to be of swift motion, but of long continuance; but our time is otherwise. When the Corinthian's propounded divers cases of conscience, after some answers the Apostle gives them in this: *But this I say, brethren, the time is short; or time is cut off:* he alludes to Sea-fearing men that have almost done their Voyage, and begin to strike sail. Time was in the beginning of the World that men might say, I may, by course of Nature, live a matter of six, or seven, or eight, or nine hundred years; but now God hath so cast out the time of our age, that so soon as we begin our Voyage, we are ready to strike sail: we have but a little time; If I should measure it out, what is it but an Ell, a Span, an Inch, a Point? And is it not time then to redeem the time?

3. Time is not only swift and short, but nothing, I say a very nothing in comparison: As some creatures are said to be nothing in comparison of others. What is the Ant to the Elephant; or the Shrimp to the Whale? what is the whole body of the Earth to the body of the Heavens? So is our time as nothing to all time; and all time is as nothing to Eternity. David that found out a short dimension

Psal. 39. 5.

mention of his time considered absolutely, or in it self, *Bebold thou hast made my dayes as an hand-breath*; yet he could find out no dimension: little enough for his time compared with God, *Mine age is as nothing before thee*. God's being consists in one Eternal now; but mans time is divided into past, present, and to come; three nothings, which being added together amount in the total to this sum, *Mine age is as nothing before thee*. Oh that we would consider of this language of the Holy Ghost! were it not enough, think you, to put us on this Duty of improving and trading our time while the time is ours, and while this short time lasteth?

4. Though time be swift and short, and as nothing in comparison, yet is it a commodity more precious than the Gold of Ophir. If herein we might hear lost Souls to utter themselves, Oh what would they say? or what would they give for a little of that little time they had on earth? If the Lord by Divine and Extraordinary dispensation would but grant them one months time to come hither again, and to make a new trial, do you think they would not prize this grant? Would they not esteem that little short Golden season of grace at an high and mighty rate? Would they not make use of every opportunity to lay hold of Heaven, and to escape those fires wherein now they are burning, frying, and flaming? O yes! if you would then tempt them, saying, *Come, spend this hour merrily*; would they not answer, *alas, we have but one months time to live here in this World, and then we must either to Hell again, or if we improve our time well, we must to Heaven*; and what? shall we trifle away this time of trial and of grace in offending God? shall we cast away our Souls again to gratifie you, or to please our own flesh, for so little a time as we have now to live? Oh God forbid! avoid Satan! avoid all Temptations! welcome now all those messengers of Heaven that will bring us the glad tidings, the tenders, the offers of Christ and of Salvation! let not one stand in the hour-glaſs run, but let us be doing some good; let this hour be spent in prayer, and the next in meditation, and the next in bearing of God's Word, and the next in the exercise of this and that grace, and so on; but not one hour in vain. Why surely thus would they prize and improve the time, that know by woful experience what it is to lose the time. And by this we may guess the worth of time; oh it is precious so precious that if all the Earth were turned into Gold, it could not purchase one minute of it. Me thinks this motive should work, and now that we have a little time, it should prevail with us to redeem the time.

5. Our time hath been a very sinful time. Ah my brethren, think over your ignorance, unbelief, worldliness, covetousness, pride, malice, lusts, lukewarmness, impatience, discontentedness, vain-glory, self love, wandering and wicked imaginations: in a word, all your pollutions, distempers, estrangedness from God in the time of your unregeneracy; oh were not those sinful, abominable, and rebellious times: or be it so that your gracious God hath since those times wrought in you effectually his saving grace, have you not since then lost your first love, or at least grown remiss, and cold, and lukewarm in it? Say then, speak out your hearts and tell me, is it not time now to remember from whence you are fallen, and to repent, and to do your first works? Blessed Mr. Bolton hath a saying, that if it were possible that any uncomfortable passion were incident to a glorified Saint in Heaven, he would be sorry, and transported with extream anger and indignation against himself that he was not a meer greedy ingroffer (as it were) and improver of time for doing excellently upon Earth, and that every hour, especially after his Conversion, was not Crowned with some rare and more remarkable exploit, with some more special and noble service for the glorifying of that most bountiful and ever-blessed God, who bath now honored him with such unspeakable glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. But if no such passion is in glorified Saints, I am sure we have all cause enough to loath our selves in our own sight for our iniquities, and for our abominations. O come, let this be a motive to spur us on, and to quicken us in this duty of Redeeming the time, because our dayes were evil.

6. The Scriptures speak of a remarkable set time of grace, a time of visitation, Luke 19. 44. a time of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. a time whilſt God may be found, Psal. 32. 6. a time when he holds out the Golden Scepter, Esther 5. 2. a time wherein the Fountain runneth, and the spirit proclaimeth, *Ho, every one that this scepter come ye to the Waters*, Isa. 55. 1. Thus Jerusalem had her time; and all the several Churches in Asia had their time; and now England, Scotland, and Ireland have their time; and if we mis-improve this time, and walk unworthy of this grace and Gospel of Christ, this time will have an end, this Sun will go down at Noon, and set upon our heads. This

day, if you will bear my voice harden not your hearts, said God to Israel; but they hardened their hearts, and therefore God sware to them in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest. If it be so with us as it was with Israel in the wilderness, we doe not know but this very day the Lord may clap an Oath upon our heads, that we shall never enter into his rest. Oh then that we would learn of the Ant, that gathereth her meat in the Summer-time! Oh that while we have this time of grace, we would redeem the time in praying, reading, hearing, meditating, and treasuring up the things belonging to our peace! This time is a let-time that hastens away: and we cannot with *Joshua*, bid the Sun stand still. O then let us say, *This is our time, and therefore what we will do for our Souls, we will do it now.* Surely better it is to redeem it now, than to wish in pain and torment for the time again when it is past redemption.

7. The time is a coming, yea it is near, even at the door, when time shall be no more. This is the voice of the seventh Angel, *And the Angel which I saw standing upon the Sea and upon the Earth, lifted up his hand to Heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer.* Who was this? a man? no, an Angel: and what, did he say it? no, he sware it: how sware it, by himself? no, he sware it by him that lives for ever: and what? that time should be little? no, it should be no longer, time should be no more. Needs must this time come, that hath all these circumstances to confirm it. And what if this time should come even in your time? what if now the seventh Angel should lift up his hand to Heaven, and take this Oath? If this time be far off as to the general Judgment (which I cannot think) yet sure I am, and without all peradventure, that it is not far off to thee and me. It may be before this year, this month, this week, this night be done, that God may say to his Angel, *Go to such a man, and such a woman, I will give them no more time; bring them hither, and here let them give an account what they have done with all their time, for I must have a reckoning of all time past.* And then comes in, *Imprimis*, so much time in Drinking and Revelling; Item so much time in Idling, Sporting, playing, &c. Oh, will God say, *were these things I gave you time for? no, no, it was for Heaven and Salvation you had your time; and if that time be mis-improved, away, away time, and now enter Eternity upon these Souls.* Is not here a motive to make us look about us? Oh my brethren, now, now if ever, redeem the time, for anon time will be gone, and then succeeds eternity, eternity, eternity.

But what are the means for redeeming time? I answer.—

They are so many, that I may have no time to enumerate the Particulars; shall we instance in some? you must pray, read, hear the Word, meditate, and watch over your hearts with extraordinary industry; mortify your members which are upon the Earth, as pride, covetousness, lusts, &c. grow up in grace, clear up your evidences against that day when all shall stand naked before that great and glorious Judge, &c. And these, and all other Duties (of which anon) must be done while the day lasteth. Here's a great work, and a little time; doth it not concern you to better your selves? If a man have much to write, and but a little Paper to write on, he must write small, and thick, and close as ever he can: So must you do. I verily believe there's not one Soul amongst us but he may find out hundreds and thousands of sins to repent him of; he may find out many and many a Particular Duty that he should be exercised in from morning to evening, and from evening to morning; so that 'tis a wonder how he can spare any time at all for any thing else. Well then, up and be doing; lose not a minute, but be in the use and exercise of some of these Duties. These are the means, and in the use of these means you may (by the Lord's help and grace concurring) redeem your time.

One Objection I would remove. *It may be the day of grace is done, the gate of mercy is already shut; and if so, how is it possible for me to redeem the time?* I answer—

1. By way of Concession. I believe there is a day of grace indeed, and if that Sun set, it will never, never rise again. *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace, but now are they hid from thine eyes.* q. d. Now is the gate of mercy shut, there is no means of grace or Salvation for ever hereafter to be hoped for. As there is no Market or Fair-day that lasteth always; if the Country will not come in, the Trades-man will at last put up his wares: So the Lord's

Luk. 19. 42.

Redeeming the time.

standing may be open, and his shop set wide for such and such a time; but if Souls will not come in, and buy without money and without price, he will at last put up his wares (all his jewels of grace) and then be gone.

2. Though it be true that there is a day of grace, and that this day may set; yet in respect of us the Ministers of Christ, we cannot determine it; and therefore so long as you live we call still, *ob repens lob redeem your time!* I may add, in respect of your selves, *it is not in you to know the times and seasons which God hath put in his own power.* And the commandment of Faith standing in force on you so long as you live, and therefore you are still to look to your Duty of redeeming the time.

3. It may be this day, this night, this Sermon, this very hour may be thy day of grace. Hearken! is not Christ's Spirit now a knocking? is not Christ himself now offering mercy to thy Soul? *O ye sons of men that have mis-improved your time, will ye now at least in this your day be wise to salvation? why now I call to your hearts; now I command you to open your everlasting doors, that I, the King of Glory, may come in; ob let this be the time of love!* Come, give me your hearts, and now redeem the time. Away, away with all objections, scruples, cavils that may hinder this Duty, and now, even now, hearken to this voice of Christ, or of the Spirit of Christ, that your Souls may live.

3. Must time be redeemed? Then for some Rules or Directions how we must redeem it.

Rule 1. *A void we every thing that would binder us from taking the opportunity.* What those things are you have heard before; as ignorance, sloth, and love of fleshly liberty. Many other particulars might be enumerated, but chiefly and especially foregoe we these.

Rule. 2. *Repent we of all former mis-improvings of our time.* There is no other way of recompensing former unfruitfulness but by repentance and after diligence. This is the second table after shipwreck; in this way we may redeem, or buy back again the time that is past. The very word *repententia* signifies *to be wise again*, after all our former follies. Oh that ever any should be so unworthy as to decry this godly-Gospel-golden Rule.

Rule 3. *Live we every day as if every day were the last day we had to live.* This Rule or direction is so comprehensive, that I must needs break it into particulars. Suppose then I were to begin this day, and that I lookt on this day as the last day of my life, how should I redeem my time; or spend this day? I answer.—

1. My first and morning-thoughts should be on God, or on something in order to his service. *My Soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the Morning.*—*O Lord be gracious to me. I have waited for thee, be thou my arm every Morning.*—*I will sing of thy power, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in thy Morning.*—*It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most high, to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the Morning.*—*How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God, when I awake, I am still with thee.* Now these Morning-thoughts may be spent either in a way of Meditation, or of Prayer; and my Duties lie in both.

2. I should meditate. I shall not determine whether Morning or Evening may be more suitable for set, deliberate, and solemn meditation? only this I affirm, that either a solemn, or an occasional meditation is a Morning-duty. In some sort meditation and prayer should ever go together; and David thus couples them, *Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation, hearken to the voice of my cry.*—*My voice shalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee.* Now these Morning-meditations (if occasional or ejaculatory) may be on such Objects as these.

1. Upon my first waking I may think on that Morning of my Resurrection, when the Lord will awake me from the dust; it is but a while till the trump shall sound, *Awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and then shall the earth cast out her dead.*

2. Upon sight of the Morning-sun I may think on that Sun of Righteousness that enlightens Heaven. The Sun that shines on me was only created for this nether World, and yet how glorious is it? Oh then what light is there in that City above, that bath no need of Sun, or Moon, or Star, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

3. Upon the putting on of my apparel I may think on that garment of Righteousness where with my soul either is or should be cloathed. Alas! what is this outward

Act. 1. 7.

Use 3.

Psal. 130. 6.

11a. 23. 2.

Psal. 59. 16.

Psal. 92. 1, 2.

Psal. 139. 17.

11a. 26.

Psal. 5. 1, 2, 3.

11a. 29. 19.

Re. 21. 23.

ward Robe but a Rag, or at best an excrement of dead worms, of which I have little reason to be proud? But my Soul's Robe is as a garment cut out of the Sun, and put upon me. *And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven, a woman clothed with the Sun.* Oh that I may be clothed with that Sun of Righteousness, or with that Righteousness of the Son of God, that I may appear before God as I am in him, pure and spotless.

I shall not instance in any other objects of my Mornings meditation; only if I find my spirit most active and fit for meditation at such a time. I should then go on, and spare more time for set, deliberate, and solemn meditations.

2. I should pray; and to this Duty I may joyn the reading of the Word. That this is a mornings Duty the Scripture is express: *In the Morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* — *And in the morning shall my prayer prevent thy answer.* — *And evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and be heard.* It is true, that Prayer and reading of the Word are two distinct exercises, yet that they mutually help one another is most manifest, and consequently are fit to be joyned together; for the word ministers matter of prayer, and is the ground of our petition, who have no promise to be heard, unless we ask according to God's word, *Job. 5. 14.* And the fitness of the morning for these exercises is evident, not only because the first of time belongs unto God, but also the heart being then most free from worldly thoughts, it is therefore fittest for Holy exercises; and withal, when in the beginning of the day the heart of man is seasoned with Holiness, and with the fear of God, he shall find himself the better fitted to walk humbly with God all the day after.

2. All the rest of the day till evening should I spend my time in the Duties of my particular calling, nor know I the least reason why any man in the world, high or low, rich or poor, should be herein exempted. *Adam must not eat his bread by sweat and labour.* *Abel was a keeper of sheep.* *Cain a tiller of the ground.* *Jabal was a Tent-maker.* *Jubal the father of such as handle the harp.* *Tubal Cain an Artificer in Brass and Iron.* All the Patriarchs of Israel were but Shepherds; and *Gen. 3. 19.* *Gen. 4. 2, 20.* *Gen. 21, 22.* Jesus Christ himself was a plain Carpenter.

But you may object, may I not herein lose my time as to God's service? One would think, if this were my last day I should do no other work but pray, or hear, or read, or meditate, &c. I answer —

1. I grant there are such times wherein God calls us extraordinarily to such spiritual Duties all the day long; as either in afflictions felt or feared, or in some special mercies expected or received. And there are those times we call the Lord's dayes, wherein we are to do no work ordinarily but of a Spiritual nature. And there are such times wherein God holds forth an opportunity of exercising graces, or of doing good; and so to embrace the occasion is one piece or part of our redeeming time. *As we have opportunity let us do good to all men.* And *your care of me hath flourished again,* *Gal. 6. 10.* (said Paul to his Philippians) *but ye lacked opportunity.* It seems their care for the Apostle was intermitted for a season, for want of opportunity to send unto him, but now they put forth again as flowers in Spring. I doubt not but in such cases as these, we may, and must for the time dispense with our particular callings. Yet —

2. In my ordinary constant daily course I am to be in the exercise of my Particular calling, with which I may either mingle some actings of grace, or ejaculatory Duties, as suddenly to look up to Heaven, and to behold the face of God, to whom I am to approve my self in my particular calling; or if they clash, I am solely to follow my particular calling, and to leave other Spiritual actings till their appointed season. Nor do I herein decline God's service. For 1. I follow my calling out of an awful respect to the eye, presence, and command of God, who hath said. *Six dayes shalt thou labour: Yea I do what I do in civil business as the work of Christ,* so that I may say at that time *now am I about the work of God, and of Jesus Christ.*

2. Seeing my self thus working for him, I may easily apprehend that for that time I honour God as much, nay more by the meanest servile worldly act, than if I should spend all that time in Prayer, Meditation, or any other Spiritual employment to which I had no call at such a time. It is noted therefore, by some, of Peter's Wives Mother, that when Christ had healed her of her Fever, she sat not down at Table with Christ in Communion with him, which (no question) was sweet, but *she ministered*

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Mat. 8. 15. *stered unto them (i. e.) she ran to and fro, and served him, and acted for him, where in she shewed more love, and gave him more honour, than if at that time she had enjoyed Communion with him in a nearer way.*

Ecc. 3.1, 4. *But I hear others object, May I not take up some little of this time in recreations? what, must I always be on my calling? Is there not a time to every purpose under Heaven? a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*

Answer: There is indeed a time to recreate; but that time is then, I say only then, when our bodies or minds are wearied with our other employments. O what a sad thing it is to see many spend a whole day, it may be a whole week in unnecessary sinful recreations! What, is this to *redeem the time*? or dare I thus spend the last day of my life in this world? Surely, God's people that make conscience of their Duties, should not meddle at any time with recreations (though in themselves lawful) without true cause, and a just calling thereunto; nor should they use them any longer, nor to any other end, but only to quicken their minds, or to revive their bodies, that so they may return with some lightness and alacrity to their callings again. He that spends his time lavishly in recreations, is like him whose Garments are made of fringes, and his meat nothing but sauces. I am not against recreations lawfully used, but God forbid that we should trifle away our time (more worth than worlds) upon foolish, vain, empty, and unnecessary toyes.

3. The evening should be closed up with spiritual duties. If you ask what Duties? I answer.

Pla. 141. 2. 1. The evening is a time for prayer, *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* To this of prayer I joyn reading the Scripture, and good books; for it is fit to close up the day with the same duties wherewith we began it.

Gen. 24. 63. 2. The evening was Isaac's time for meditation: *And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide.* It may be in this Duty the morning is not so seasonable for some tempers; but shall the evening pass without some spiritual Holy meditations? Some conceive the evening to be the very season of set and deliberate meditation; and in this case how fruitful might I be in the use of that Ordinance of *Looking unto Jesus, as he carries on the great work of our Salvation from first to last?* O that this Duty of meditation, either on that, or any other spiritual subject, were not so neglected as it is by Christians themselves! The Lord gave Joshua a charge, that he should meditate on his Law day and night; and David's character of the blessed man is, that his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night. And David's own practice was to remember God upon his bed, and to meditate on him in the night-watches. And Paul's charge to Timothy was to meditate upon spiritual things, and to give himself wholly to them. Or if you'll have another proof for the evening-season, not only was it Isaac's time, but David's time, *Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.*

3. The evening is a season for self-examination. This is another glorious ordinance which many Christians use occasionally, and against some good time; but to set some time apart for this every evening, and that in conscience, as they do for reading the word, and Prayer, where is the Christian almost to be found? I am sure it was David's charge, *Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.* And agreeable to this was his practice, *I call to remembrance my song in the night, I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.* Chrysostom on these words of David, *What means this* (saith he) *commune with your own hearts upon your bed?* thus answers himself, *after supper-time, when ye are going to sleep, and are ready to lie down on bed, and have great quiet and silence, without the presence or disturbance of any, then erect a tribunal for the conscience.* — And when neither friend disturbs you, nor servants provoke you, nor multitudes of business do press upon you, then take an account of your life, what you have done in the day-time before. And Dorotheus lays it down as a rule which the Christians of his time had learned of their fore-fathers, that is Biblioth. Pot. *the evening they should question themselves how they had passed the day.* Oh that Christians now would sum up their accounts at the foot of every page, I mean, that they would call themselves to scrutiny every evening when they are ready to compose themselves to sleep, as to the little Images of Death!

Psal. 4. 4.

Psal. 77. 6.

Post denam, Chrysost. Eccl. pos. in Psal. 4. 4. Docuerant nos saepe patres nos frat. Eccl. Do. roth. tom. 1. Biblioth. Pot. p. 14. *thus answers himself, after supper-time, when ye are going to sleep, and are ready to lie down on bed, and have great quiet and silence, without the presence or disturbance of any, then erect a tribunal for the conscience.* — And when neither friend disturbs you, nor servants provoke you, nor multitudes of business do press upon you, then take an account of your life, what you have done in the day-time before. And Dorotheus lays it down as a rule which the Christians of his time had learned of their fore-fathers, that is Biblioth. Pot. *the evening they should question themselves how they had passed the day.* Oh that Christians now would sum up their accounts at the foot of every page, I mean, that they would call themselves to scrutiny every evening when they are ready to compose themselves to sleep, as to the little Images of Death!

4. The evening is a season to consider my Priviledges in Christ. When ^{David Psal. 48.} was ready for his Bed, *I will lay me down in peace, and sleep* (saith he,) *for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.* See how he speaks of peace, and rest, and sleep, and safety: all these were Priviledges. Me thinks it is a sweet conclusion of a good dayes work, and a blessed farewell to the World if this evening were my last, and that immediately I must go to God, to consider of some of those glorious Priviledges in God and Christ. I might instance in my peace, and rest, and sleep, and safety, by vertue of a promise, or covenant of Grace; or I might instance in my Election, Redemption, Reconciliation, Adoption, Sanctification, Glorification: But because these are commonly handled; and our communion with God and Christ; and the spirit of Christ is the most ravishing Priviledge in this World, my soul carries me out for the present to pitch on this.

* One of our Worthies hath writ eminently on it; and for a taste of his excellent work, ^{* Dr. Owens} the sweeting of my last thoughts with such an excellent subject, I shall contract it thus, ^{communion} ^{God the Father, Son, and} ^{Holy Ghost.}

1. I would consider my communion with God the Father in love. *This the Father particularly fixes upon the Saints;* and this they are immediately to eye him in, God is love. Christians walk of times with exceeding troubled hearts concerning the thoughts of the Father towards them; they are well persuaded of the Lord Christ and his good will; the difficulty lies in what is their acceptance with the Father, what is his heart towards them? Now here is the work of the Gospel to discover the love of the Father: this is the will of God, that he may always be eyed as being kind, tender, loving, yea as the Fountain and Spring of all gracious Communications and fruits of love; and when Christians apprehend this, that God is love, and so rest upon him, and delight in him as such, then have they communion with the Father in love.

Now for the exercise of my soul in this blessed communion, the directions are such as these.—

1. I must eye the Father as Love. I must not look on him as one that is always angry, but as one most kind and tender in himself, and as one that hath had thoughts of kindness towards his Saints from everlasting.

2. I must so eye the love of the Father, as to receive it by faith; I must believe this love of God as for myself. Certainly his love is not mine, nor will it be mine in the sweetness of it, until it be so received. Either I must know it, assent to it, embrace it, and have all my affections filled with it, or it will be in vain as to my Communion with God the Father.

3. This love must have its proper fruit and efficacy upon my heart in a return of love to him again. ^{To this purpose God loves, that he may be beloved; this is the return that he demands,} ^{Pro. 23.26.} My son, give me thy heart, thy affections, thy love O the Priviledge of Saints! they have meat to eat that the World knows not of they have close communion and fellowship with the Father; they deal with him in the interchange of love; so that every one of them may say, If I have hatred in the World, I will goe where I am sure of love; though all others are hard to me, yet my Father is tender and full of compassion, I will goe to him, and satisfy my self in him.

4. I would consider of my communion with God the Son in grace. So the Apostle speaking of our communion with him as Mediator, concludes his Epistles, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Not to mention any other grace, but his purchased grace ^{1 Cor. 6. 23.} of justification, or acceptance with God the directions for this Communion are such as these.—

I must eye Christ's doings and sufferings; not as for himself but for his Saints, and for their Righteousness. He was made under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons, And he bare our sins in his body on the Tree. This was the end of Christ's life and death, to work out a compleat Righteousness for believers, as to a perfect acceptance before God.

I must approve of this Righteousness of Christ as that alone which is absolutely compleat, and able to make me acceptable before God. Of this I am convinced, that if I die this night, there is a necessity of a Righteousness, wherewith I must appear before God; and if I have nothing to commend me unto God but my own Righteousness, oh how should I appear before his glory? there is no other name but Christ whereby I can be saved; and there is no other Righteousness but Christ whereby I can be justified. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I Righteousness and strength.

3. I must make an actual communion with the Lord Jesus as to my sins, and his Righteousness. And to that purpose 1. I must hearken to the voice of Christ calling me to him with my burthen, Come to the thou poor soul with thy guilt of sin, for that is mine; this agreement I made with my Father from all Eternity, that I should come, and take thy sins and bear them away; they were my lot, give me thy burden, give me all thy sins, thou knowest not what to do with them, I know how to dispose of them well enough, so that God shall be glorified, and thy soul delivered. 2. Upon this call

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call I must lay down my sins at the Cross of Christ upon his shoulders. This is faith great and bold adventure upon the grace, faithfulness, and truth of Christ, to stand by the Cross, and say, Ah! he is bruised for my sins, and wounded for my transgressions, and the chastisement of my peace is upon him : He is thus made sin for me ; here I give up my sins to him that is able to bear them ; he requires at my hands that I should be content to throw my sins upon him, and to this I consent. 3. Having thus by faith given up my sins to Christ, I must draw nigh, and take from him that Righteousness which he hath wrought out for me : To this purpose he renders himself and his Righteousness to be my Righteousness before God ; and by my accepting of it, I compleat this bartering and exchange of faith, and come into communion with Jesus Christ, as to my acceptance with God by grace. He was made sin for us, that we might become the Righteousness of God in him.

2 Cor. 5. 21.

John 14. 26. 3. I would consider of my communion with the holy Ghost in comfort. We read usually in the Gospel that he is the Comforter. Oh the condescension of the Holy Ghost ! he willingly proceedeth, or comes forth from the Father to be our Comforter ; he knew what we were, and what would be our dealings with him ; he knew we would grieve him, provoke him, quench his motions, desile his dwelling-place, and yet he would come to be our Comforter. Now for my communion with the holy Ghost herein the directions are these.—

Luke 11. 13.

John 15. 26. 1. I must ask him of the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the daily work of Believers ; they look upon, and consider the holy Ghost as promised to be sent, and in this promise they know lies all their grace, peace, mercy, and comfort ; for by him so promised are these things communicated. O then how should I ask him of the Father, who is as ready to bestow him on me, as I am to give my children bread ? If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ?

John 16. 7. 2. If comfort come, I must learn to act faith distinctly on the Holy Ghost, as the immediate efficient cause of all my comfort. It may be the Spirit is given, and he renders, or administers consolations, but then I do not consider him as the Comforter, why surely this grieves him : a lively faith will take notice of his kindness ; upon every work of consolation that I receive, I should write this motto. This is from the Holy Ghost, he is my Comforter, and the God of all my consolation.

John 14. 12. 3. I must return praise and thanks, and honour, and glory, and blessings to him on the account of those comforts I receive from him. When I feel myself warmed with joy, supported with peace, or established in obedience, I should then ascribe to him the praise that is his due. And this praising of him is no small part of my communion with him.

Say now, is not here a Priviledge worthy of my consideration ? would not a Psal. 119. 54, thought of this, and my acting in this, leave a sweet favour in my soul when I am going to my Bed as to my grave ? David could say, Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my Pilgrimage ; I have remembred thy name O Lord in the night. And my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. Ay, but when must this be ? He answers, When I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. And he fastens it as a Duty upon all Saints, Let the Saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds. And the Church resolves upon it, With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. Surely it is God (saith Elihu who giveth songs in the night) his song shall be with me. And 'twas a blessed remedy to his heavy Soul, I call to remembrance my song in the night. Oh that with such thoughts and considerations of my communion with God, and Christ, and the spirit of Christ, or of some other Priviledge, I might every night go to my Bed ! for then like the Philomel should I sing in the night ; yea then would my soul be satisfied as with Marrow and fatness, and my Mouth would praise him with joyful lips.

I might instance in many other duties which would then be seasonable, but these are the main ; and if this day were my last day, or if this night I must die, my last in this world, yet I should comfortably hope that in the doing of these duties in a spiritual manner, I had in good measure redeemed my time ; and that when I awoke, though I never awake till the Resurrection day, yet then should I see God face to face, and I should be satisfied with his likeness : Psal. 17. 15.

I have now done ; only before we part, I would say something of the deceased party as to our edification, and so an end.

You know I have been sparing in this way, because of many abuses, and especially because all promiscuously look for praises at their death, howsoever they spend their life. But now God hath removed me from this pastoral charge, and I shall not here perform many of these last offices of love, probably never more than this ; and therefore at this time I shall crave your patience and attentions to what may be spoken without any prejudice to truth or harm to you.

The Duty I am pressing on you, is to redeem the time ; and this I believe of the deceased party, that the redeemed her time. I shall not speak of her Birth, Education, Progeny, Nobility : *Siemmo a quid faciunt?* Alas ! what's all this to a Funeral-Sermon ? Nor shall I speak of her youth or flourishing time ; as I am a stranger to it, so I believe she had, or might have her failings in that time. The temptations of honour, riches, prosperity, and youth are stronger than most imagine ; and therefore prayed *David*, *Remember not the sins of my youth : Psal. 25. 7.* and all that are honourable may pray, *Remember not the sins of my honour, nobility, and greatness in the world.* For my part I shall not take notice of these things, or of those times, but rather speak of her redeeming the time, since that time that forsaking the World in great measure, she gave up her self in a more retired and solitary way to serve her God.

Now then if here I begin ; She hath for these many years redeemed her time ; as thus, 1. In life, 2. In Death.

1. In life, it will appear in her general and particular calling.

For the first, ordinarily every Morning and every evening she was exercised in those duties of Meditation and Prayer : This was her course, not by fits and starts, but daily, in her pleasant Walks, or private Chamber, she spent both her early and later hours in Communion with God. Nor speak I this by report only, for of her goodness and bounty she was pleased every Spring to invite me to her House, and by this means I was acquainted with her constant course. Indeed I was the more willing to embrace her welcome, because her House seemed to me as a *Colledge for Religion*, or as a retirement from the noises and more frequent Temptations of the World, and this gave her, and me, and all that pleased, an happy opportunity to continue our devotions without interruption. Some Books she had for contemplation, others for an Holy conversation, others for meditation, others for devotion ; of all sorts some, and of all these sorts she made some use ; but of all books for constant use and practice she preferred the Bible, telling me often that other Books had their use and delight ; till with often reading they became more ordinary, and then they seemed to lose of their former lustre, glory, and excellency ; but the Bible was in her often-reading ever fresh, and green, and new : She found in it still such perpetual streams of Holy, Heavenly, and Spiritual delights, that (as *Tertullian* said) she could not but *admire and adore the fulness of the Scriptures*.

2. Ordinarily she spent the rest of the day in her works of the needle, with her maids about her : Or if other things of Houswifery had interposed, she was never so transported with honour, as to scorn her duty in the way of a particular calling. Well she had learnt that idleness was the rust and canker of the soul, the Devils cushion, pillow, chief reposal, his very tide-time of Temptation ; and therefore with conscience and faithfulness she was diligent in her particular, as well as general, calling. Now and then she would have visited poor cottages, and relieved their necessities ; but ever was she courteous to the Neighbourhood, and careful in the affairs of her own House. Take all together, and for ought I know she might be a pattern to most of the Ladies in our Nation, or at least as a bright Morning-star amongst other stars.

2. She redeemed her time in death, or near her death ; now indeed she was taken off her particular calling, and therefore this time she spent (as she could for sickness) in the exercise of spiritual duties, and spiritual graces. For duties she was much in them, of which we speak before ; and for graces she shined, and was most eminent in such as these. As —

1. In meekness. She was of a meek and quiet spirit : seldom have I seen her exorbitant in passions, but often have I seen her amidst provocation quiet, meek, gentle, and easie to be intreated. In her sickness she carried it as a lamb ; not a word of passion or peevishness issued out of her lips, so far as I observed. The very Image of Christ was, in this respect, drawn fair within her, *Learn of me, for I am meek : Matth. 11.29.* Christ a meek Christ, and she a meek creature.

2. In humility. She was of high descent, and sprung of Royal blood ; yet humble in heart, and lowly in spirit. She never scorned the poorest Creature, but often stooped to wonderful condescensions, as I conceived. In her sickness, as well as death, she laid her honor in the dust. She was far from the opinion of them that think *humility a debasement, and meekness a derogation from their repose* ; no, no, she had otherwise learned of Christ, humility was her Ornament, and therewith the decked her self (in the Apostles language *1 Pet. 5.5.*) or cloathed her self, both in health and in sickness, when she could put on no other cloathing. Hence she was stiled by some, *the bumble bumbleless Lady.*

3. In patience, submission, and contentedness of spirit to be at God's disposal. She had a sore sickness, and because of her former health it was to her the sorier. Of many years before she had not layn sick in Bed one day, but many a turn had she took in her Walks and Gallery, and through much exercise in that way she had the advantage both of her health and communion with God ; but now the Lord laid her on a Bed of sickness, not for a day, or two, or three, or four, but for a long while together. She that before had walked with God, was now God's prisoner ; and such was the nature of the sickness, that she could not stir nor move one foot, yet was she patient and submissive to God's hand ; she kissed the rod, she learnt the Churches

lesson, *I will base the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him* : *Micah. 7.9.* She never murmured nor repined one whit, but as she was taught, so she learnt and conformed to that frame of *Eli and David, Lord here I am, do with me as seems good in thine own eyes.*

4. In faith. She was ever and anon, during her sickness acting faith, often she acknowledged her own nothingness, vileness, wretchedness; that she was of little faith, and of no ability, in respect of her self, to help her self. Indeed her weakness in faith, in grace, and in all performances was her constant complaint; and this made me to mind her of that promise, that *he would not quench the smacking flux, nor break the bruised reed, until he brought forth judgement unto victory*: *Mat. 12. 20.* Some others I have seen most confident in their sickness of salvation, whom though I dare not censure, because unacquainted with their grounds, yet I ingeniously acknowledge that I like dearly of an humble, trembling, self-condemning frame. Sure I am, that they who are vilest in their own eyes, are persons in whom God most delighteth. I remember how *Paul in Scripture* be spattered himself, but are not those passages his beauty-pots? Give me a man amongst you that will lick the dust of *Jesus feet*, and I dare say of such a one, that Christ will take him into his arms, and lay him in his bosome: it was her condition, she was all in confession of her spiritual poverty, yet she cast her self into the blessed-bleeding arms of *Jesus Christ*; yea she lay at his feet crying, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*: and again, *I rest upon Christ, and upon Christ alone for Heaven and Salvation*: and again, *Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in him*; and again, *He hath delivered, and he doth deliver, and I trust in him that he will deliver me still*; and again, *Hold out faith, and answ thou wilt come to vision*. This last word, *hold out faith*, was one of the last words she spake on that last day of her life.

5. In her love to Ministers. Her heart was wholly set on Christ; and as a true sign of it, she loved Christ's image, especially in his Ministers. And now I speak my own loss; amongst others she was pleased to cast her affections on the unworthiest of all my Masters messengers. In her like-time she preferr'd me to this place; the Lord made her the first wheel of his providence in bringing me hither, and it was some trouble to her spirit that I left this pastoral charge before she left the World. Indeed she honoured all the Ministers of Christ, yea the very function it self for Christ his sake. Oh how will she rise up in judgement at the last day against those that make it their work to reproach, vilifie, and contemn the dispensers of Gods word:

6. In her love and charity towards all. Many discords have been in these sad times, and she hath suffered much in many respects, yet in her approaches near to the confines of Eternity, I desired her to forgive others, as she desired God to forgive her; at which she proclaimed it very affectionately, that *she freely forgave all the World*; and *she desired all whom she had offended to forgive her*. Her children then kneeling about her, she gave them a blessing, as *Jacob gave to Joseph* and his children: this blessing was pronounced with that cheerfulness, heartiness, and fervency of spirit, that it melted hearts, and caused a flood of tears round about her Bed; in so much that she was faine to rouze up her self, and to bespeak them, as Christ did those weeping women, *Weep not for me, but weep for your selves; why should you weep for me that am going to my Christ, and to those joys prepared by Christ?* And then she gave a charge; the subject of it was a relative, respective duty to be performed by brethren; it concern'd him most who was the begining of her strength, or the excellency of her power: *Gen. 49. 3.* and so far as Justice, or Religion calls, I presume it will never be forgotten by him.

7. In her desire to die, and to be with *Jesus Christ*, which was best of all. Sometimes she cried, *Oh when will that good hour come!* And again sometimes, *Oh that I were dissolved, that I might be with Christ!* But telling her of her duty, that she must wait, for waiting was a posture fit for servants; *Psal. 123. 2. Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and so the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her Mistress*, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until his mercy upon us. Why then (said she) *I will wait, why Lord I will wait until my change shall come*. Only the minded that promise, *Heb. 10. 37. For yet a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and he will not tarry*. One thing was her trouble, she was afraid that her strong heart would not yield without much strugling to the stroke of death; of this she told me and others once and again; her reasons were best known to her self, but she prophesied truly; for indeed when death came to her heart, she uttered such groanes that she outgroaned all our prayers. At last death by degrees overcame the strength of nature, and then she calmly and quietly left the world in the midst of our prayers; just in that passage, that *her soul might be taken up by the Lord Jesus Christ into the Bridegroom-chamber*.

You see now how she redeemed the time in life and death. As Christ said to the Lawyer, so I say to you, *Go thou and do likewise*, *Luke. 10. 37.* It is but a while that all of you have to live, and therefore I beseech you improve time, lay hold of every season to get to Heaven. Live every day as if were your last on earth. *Walk accurately exactly, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*, *Redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil.*

